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STAT

NEWS CONFERENCE

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 12:25 P.M. EST

FEBRUARY 7, 1977

MONDAY

MR. POWELL: Let me explain to you a little bit of a procedural thing here before we get into the regular part of the briefing.

As you know, Rex Granum sat in on the Cabinet meeting this morning, which ran about a half hour past the 11:00 o'clock stopping time. He is preparing his notes now and will give you a briefing from the Cabinet meeting.

What I would like to do is to deal with the relatively few announcements I have this morning, take your questions on those, and then recess for about 15 minutes, allow you to file on that. And Rex and I can get together on the Cabinet meeting and then return for his briefing on the Cabinet session.

I am certainly open to suggestions for another way to do it, if that causes anybody any serious problems. It seemed to us that might be the best way to do it under these circumstances.

Okay; we will consider that done.

You have a release on this, or will have in the back of the room. The President today wishes to announce that he will nominate Admiral Stansfield Turner as Director of Central Intelligence.

Admiral Turner is presently the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in Southern Europe, with headquarters in Naples, Italy.

As you know, Admiral Turner met with the President on Thursday of last week, upon his return to this country from Europe. He did return as a result of the President's desire to meet with him on this matter.

The President feels, of course, that Admiral Turner is eminently qualified for this position, with a background both academically and militarily.

He had, I might say, some comments about the Admiral's qualifications at the Cabinet meeting, which Rex will relate to you in some detail during his briefing.

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My attempts this morning to ask him to find out to what extent he had had contact with the Admiral since Naval Academy days -- I asked him how well he knew the Admiral at the Naval Academy. He said he hardly knew him at all, that he could not remember ever meeting him, and said, "He was so far ahead of the rest of us that no one was even jealous of him."

Q Does he mean academically?

MR. POWELL: And militarily, I believe.

Q They are one year apart?

MR. POWELL: No, they were in the same class, the class of 1947. To deal with a continuing problem, the class of 1947, which was President Carter's class, graduated in 1946 because of an accelerated program during the war years. Admiral Turner was, as you will see from the biography, graduated 1946, class of 1947.

Q Was there any reason why he picked a military man for this job?

MR. POWELL: I don't think there was any particular inclination to look for a military man for this job, nor did he feel that there was any reason not to consider a military person for the post.

The law, as some of you may know, seems to specifically contemplate the possible appointment of an active duty military officer to this position, inasmuch as it states that the appointment will be from an active or reserve military officer or a civilian.

Q Is he going to retire or resign his commission?

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MR. POWELL: I don't believe that it is necessary for him to resign his commission.

Q Will there be a civilian deputy?

MR. POWELL: Yes, of course, the law requires that of the top two people, one will be a civilian.

Q There are now two civilians. One is by a civilian man and one by the military man. Is there going to be another military man?

MR. POWELL: I believe the civilian deputy is considered to be the No. 2 post.

Q But he will stay on active duty?

MR. POWELL: Yes, I believe that is the tradition in the past. As you know, we have had three or four -- Rayburn was the last one. I don't remember what he did, but I do believe that Mr. Smith and some of the others were.

Q He is not going to stay on as a civilian deputy?

MR. POWELL: I don't think that is appropriate for me to make an announcement about that. I don't know for a fact.

Q The President and Hamilton Jordan felt very highly of him, so highly they felt he could be considered for the top job. Is the President going to ask him to stay on?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q How widely has the White House consulted with Congress on this?

MR. POWELL: I can't give you specifics on it, but I believe that the President and others in the White House have spoken with a number of Members of Congress over the past two or three days.

Q Does he have any background in intelligence? Has he ever done any intelligence work for the government?

MR. POWELL: He has been directly involved in strategic planning of which the intelligence component is major. In the utilization of the product and the evaluation of the product, he has been involved in that.

Q You feel this complies with the requisite of going outside the agency?

MR. POWELL: I don't think it is a question of how I feel. I think it is clear that he is not and has not been --

Q Everytime somebody investigates or makes a study of the intelligence agencies, one of the criticisms they always raise is when it comes to military intelligence, each of the services begin to have a parochial view and that tends to reflect the sort of weapons they need, the sort

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of interests that are of interest to just the particular service. I suppose that Mr. Carter has talked to the Admiral. I noted the Admiral is a very strong advocate of sea power. I know he is very interested in the buildup of the Russian Navy and all that sort of thing.

Is Mr. Carter convinced he can divorce himself from any Navy views and have an overall objective view?

MR. POWELL: Yes, I think the President is. I might refer you to an article by Admiral Turner in the latest edition of Foreign Affairs on the question of Naval strength and specifically in comparison with the Soviets.

I believe you will find that that view, the views expressed in that article, would not be construed as being parochial in nature. and, as an indication of his --

Q He is not a new fellow. Some of us who have been around Washington for a long time have known him for a long time.

MR. POWELL: You mean we haven't got a new face?

Q Is one of the major reasons for his appointment the President's concern of the buildup of Soviet naval power?

MR. POWELL: I can't assess what part that played, although, the President has, in the past on several occasions, expressed publicly his interest in that situation. But the major reason is his feeling that this is a person who has his complete trust, who is eminently qualified; based on his conversations with him and the fact that he is not entirely unknown.

Q What brought him to the President's attention?

MR. POWELL: He obviously, knew of, even though they were not close friends at the Naval Academy, knew of and respected and admired him then.

He was invited by the Admiral to speak at the Naval War College as Governor of Georgia.

Q What year was that?

MR. POWELL: I believe '73, perhaps.

Q What was the year?

MR. POWELL: I believe '73.

Q Jody, when Mr. Carter announced that he selected Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Sorensen appeared in person, as have most other of his selectees for top posts. Is there any particular reason why Admiral Turner isn't here this morning?

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MR. POWELL: No particular reason. As you know, we are in the process of appointing the whole range of officials at this general level at the time. Mr. Sorensen appeared as the others did, but you should not read anything into that other than the fact that speculation had become fairly heavily.

We felt it was proper to go ahead this morning and make the announcement.

Q Just to get you straight, Jody, you are implying that Admiral Turner's knowledge of the Soviet Union buildup and so forth, played a role in the selection?

MR. POWELL: I can't say that.

Q Isn't that what you were really saying?

MR. POWELL: I can't state that for a fact.

Q What are you saying about that?

MR. POWELL: All I can say is that the President has publicly in the past expressed his concern about the relative strengths, not so much with regard to the existing comparison, but with relationship to possible trends, to future trends. That is as far as I can go on it.

Q Was Admiral Turner's name discussed the first time around or did his availability become known in the last several weeks after the Sorensen withdrawal?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q You said the President sent out feelers to the Hill or there was some discussion from people on the Hill on this. Can you give us any idea of what sort of reasons you have been given on the Hill?

MR. POWELL: I can't, at this point.

Q Do you know when the actual nomination will go to the Hill?

MR. POWELL: No, I don't. I believe it would likely be within the next day or so.

Q Will he draw two salaries if he doesn't resign from his commission?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q You indicated last week that the President was pleased with Mr. Knoche's performance and he didn't feel under any pressure to name the CIA man. Was there any pressure brought from the Hill or is there a moral factor involved at the CIA that that appointment was rushed in any way?

MR. POWELL: No, the appointment was not rushed. So far as I know, there was no pressure.

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Q Was Bill Moyers ever considered?

MR. POWELL: I don't know to what degree Bill Moyers was considered.

Q This is a remark, he was so far ahead of the rest of us that no one was even jealous of him. The biography of the President at the Naval Academy, when he graduated, indicates that he was way up there. Do you know what the President's rank was when he graduated?

Q Fifty-nine.

MR. POWELL: I have heard that figure, but not from him. I don't know.

Q It is in "Why Not the Best?" I read the chapter on Friday.

Q He was the best.

Q It is in the chapter on Rickover.

MR. POWELL: Within 59 of the best. We thought about entitling the book, "Why Not 59th."

Q Did he discuss this with Admiral Rickover, does Rickover know him personally?

MR. POWELL: I don't know that. I don't know whether they talked about it. I would be surprised if it did not come up.

Q Are you sure that Rickover really wanted Turner to run for President?

MR. POWELL: Probably. (Laughter.)

Q You say you don't know whether Rickover was involved in this decision?

MR. POWELL: No. I said I would have been surprised if the President had not mentioned it to him.

Q When did the President actually make up his mind on Turner?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q Was it before the conversation with Rickover?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q In the overhaul of the CIA, he really turned the place upside-down, just completely overhauled it.

MR. POWELL: With regard to curriculum and that sort of thing, that was certainly one of the things that recommended him -- a person, an innovative person, who was a leader as well as a commander in the sense of inspiring

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dedication and extra effort from those who worked for and with him.

Q Will he have the dual role of all the intelligence services as sort of the overall chief as well as the CIA Director, is that the double capacity?

MR. POWELL: He will have that dual role.

I believe at the time of the Sorensen appointment, the President said, for the President at least, he would.

Q Was his name under consideration to any extent at all? Was he among those looked at back in December, prior to the selection of Mr. Sorensen?

MR. POWELL: I don't know if he was considered at the time of Sorensen.

I have two other things. The President has asked Jack Eckard to stay on as General Services Administrator. Mr. Eckard was initially appointed to the job by President Ford. President Carter met with Mr. Eckard last Friday. At the conclusion of that meeting, he asked him to stay on the job. The President feels that it is important that the top GSA job not be political in nature, although Mr. Eckard is a Republican, his retention was recommended by Florida Governor Reubin Askew, and by key members of that State's congressional delegates, all Democrats.

Q Will he have to disclose his finances like everybody else?

MR. POWELL: It is my understanding that people who are asked to remain in these positions will fall under the same rules of disclosure and if appropriate, divestiture, that new appointments will.

Q Is that a prepared release, too?

MR. POWELL: That is not in the form of a prepared release, although we can have one for you if you need it, I think, before the briefing is over.

Q Jody, isn't it inherent that the President is satisfied with the way Eckard ran the GSA, since named by Ford?

MR. POWELL: I wouldn't want to imply that he is completely satisfied or is in a position to be aware enough of the functions of any agency to be totally satisfied. I think you can imply that he is satisfied with the capabilities of Mr. Eckard to administer that agency.

I might also tell you that the President is pleased with reports that workers are being able to return to their jobs and that schools are reopening in certain parts of the country, particularly upstate New York, and Northern New Jersey.

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